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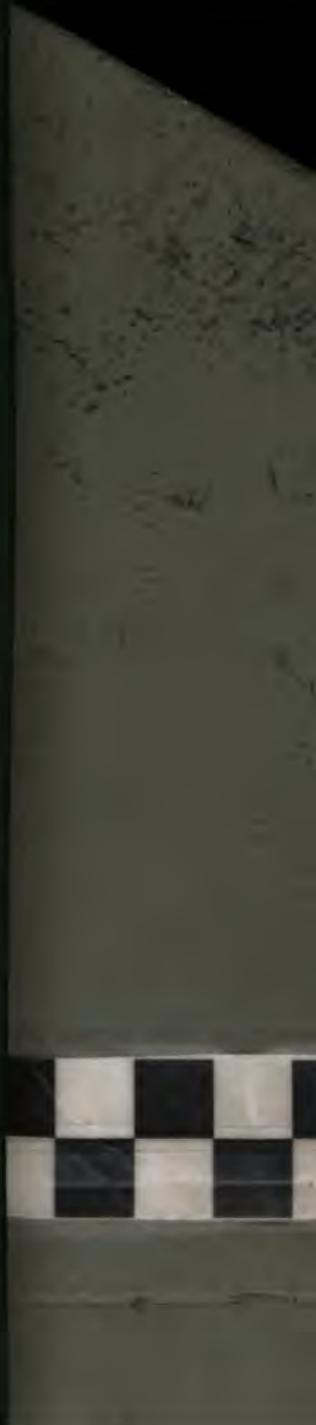
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4

Ode to
Childhood
and
Other Poems



Archer Sewall

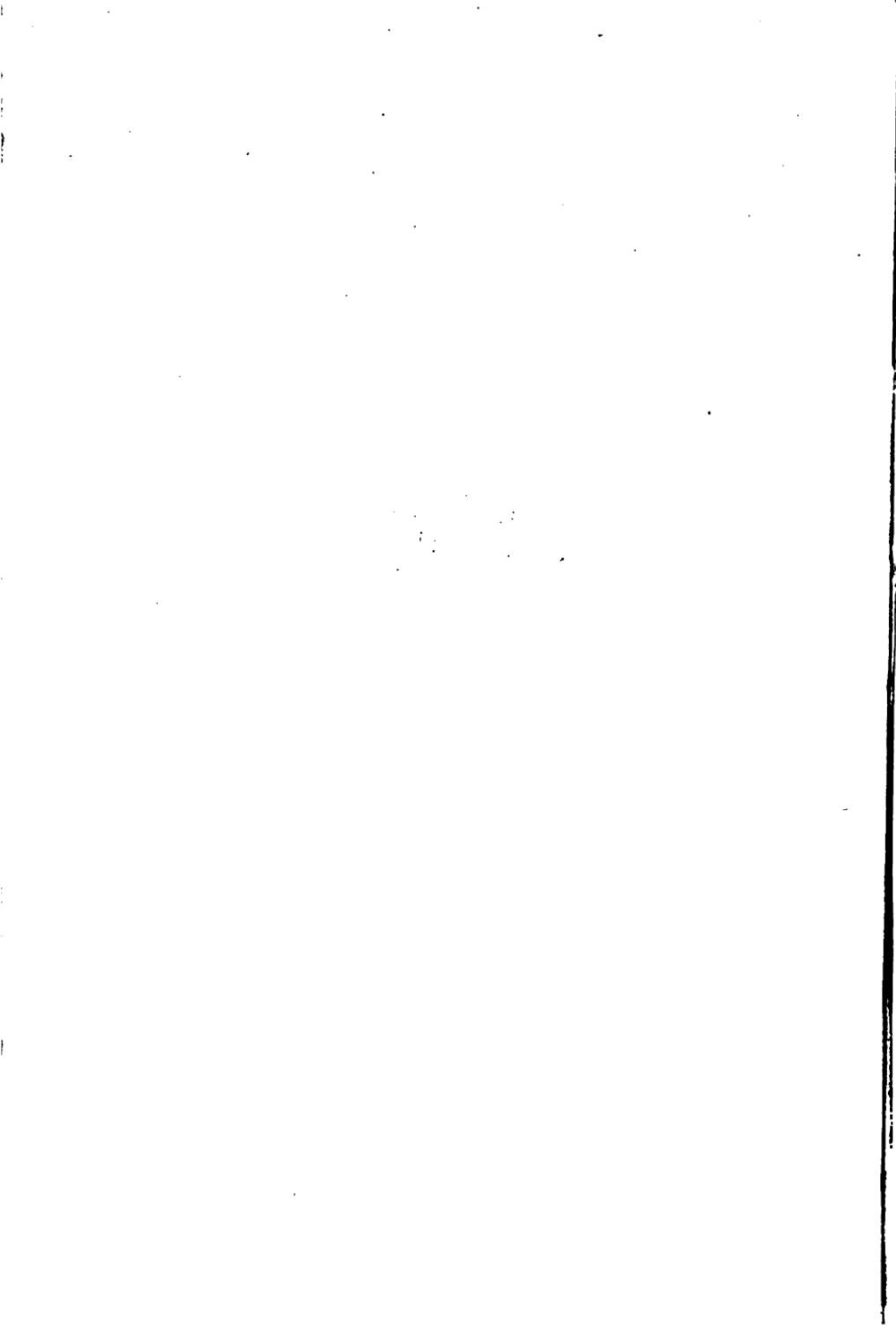


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THE
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MUSEUM

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AN ODE TO
GIRLHOOD
AND OTHER POEMS.

By ALICE ARCHER SEWALL

WITH FRONTISPICE

By H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY



NEW YORK AND LONDON
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MONOGRAM
GLADYS
VIRGINIA

TO
MY HOME
I Dedicate
MY BOOK



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GIRLHOOD

AN ODE

I

How can I write of you, whom to express
Is to remove from you chief perfectness?
Ye shrines of the unspoken and unborn,
Round whom the morn
Plays with bewildering glory till the mind
Deterred is in what it sought to find,
And ye can wander free
For worship and for mystery.

三

For what we know is conquered and beneath.
'Tis the Unknown that leads us, and for this

GIRLHOOD

To you does Heaven bequeath
Frailty eternal, which to even kiss
Is to destroy
Once more first joy.

III

Symbols and prophecies ye are;
Yet sweeter far
You that our eyes have seen
Than what you mean;
This pregnant interval than what it brings,
This dainty dallying 'mid little things,
While the portentous future beats and waits
At all your gates.
For majesty pathetic is compressed
To all your little limbs and speech and ways,
And Heaven's maternal smile within your breast
And haunt your fluttering plays.
And so enriched ye are for earth's demand
That never simply can ye walk or stand

GIRLHOOD

As do all creatures, but in everything
A hundred-folded message ye must bring,
A hundred movements leaning into one,
A hundred memories when ye are gone.

IV

Ye jewelled caskets of celestial fire
Wherefore such rich attire ?
Such trailing veils of interfolding blues
That cool around your warm arms twist and
tie
Puzzling the charmed eye
With hidden form and multitudinous hues.
And pink for mimicry of love ye wear
Who know it not, and in your slumbrous hair
Flowers that fade ye wreath,
And when ye breathe
Rush the light twinkles over broidered vest
Where symbols of desire rise and rest;

GIRLHOOD

And pleasure whirls from you at every turn
As swift your foreheads burn,
And spheres of glory flung out as ye move
Catch us into your love.

v

Wherefore so much beyond all need so fair?
Ye very tender are,
And keep small animals to watch and feed,
And would not jilt a beetle from his weed,
And step around a resting butterfly
With careful courtesy ;
And from your passion-potent finger-tips,
And long-prepared comfort of your lips,
And shoulders hollowed for the weary man
Since earth began,
Ye nurse and heal whatever things ye meet,
Then who can say ye need not be so sweet ?

GIRLHOOD

VI

And ye are the most innocent of all.
Not a curled sea-shell very frail and small,
Nor tiny waxen lily hid in green
Have such a presence, as upon the brink
Of evil ye will nod and bloom nor shrink
From what being strange is welcome as the
rest.

And babes who rush into your bending breast
Seemed mated innocents who recognize
Each other strayed from the same Paradise,
And to each other fitted do entwine
Rosy and sacred with instinct divine.
And little lambs and all the soft-cheeked flowers
Make occupations fit for the new hours
That come without regret and pass away
Without regret. For oh ye are so gay
The most celestial heavens may express
In you their holiness.

GIRLHOOD

VII

Though largely grown how artless is your way
Of using your grand limbs, and how ye play
With swift experiments
Of stronging sense,
As backward will ye sudden glance
In the unplannèd dance,
And, knee to shoulder, and from hip to heel
Great curves ye feel.
And rippling stretch of muscles swift and
fine
That under ivory flesh do run and twine
As all alert, high-foreheaded ye pace.
And oh the grace
That swarms like kissing bees
Into the white-cupped spring of your omnip-
otent throats
Where lies the honey of your movements,
whence the notes

GIRLHOOD

Run out in chords to all extremities,
Binding in one supreme desire to please
Both modesty and majesty and mirth
The most complex and darling upon earth.

VIII

And for soft-gathered friendships ye were made,
Close as the lambs lie close in summer shade,
Long, patient broideries ye meek will sew
If ye may sit together, and magic grow
The silken peacocks 'neath your bended heads
With soft, incessant noises
Of brooding voices.
And ye will double longest paths to be
In comradry ;
And thousand intimacies unknown to men
Ye do profoundly whisper each, and then,
Wrapped in your mutual mysteries, ye kiss
As flowers do that know not coarser bliss

GIRLHOOD

And in entwinèd companies ye pass
Over the twinkling grass.

IX

Ye have great admirations which enfold
Your high elect in quivering heat of gold,
Which, flung around a man, do dazzle all
His outlines so that fact is past recall;
So does the sun
Dazzle the rocks with warm confusion,
And whom you lift thus from his humble place
Plods all unwittingly before your face
Moving within a glory not his own
Veiled and anointed and himself unknown.
Oh generous and free,
Happy are ye
Who thus create
Your own estate,
And fitting earth to your supreme demand
Meet unsurprised the Beautiful at hand.

GIRLHOOD

x

The centre of the rose sees not the rose,
The star deep in the wells of evening knows
All other lights in heaven save his own,
And Beauty walking in its Paradise
Is to itself unknown ;
For if it recognize
Its unashamed limbs, driven, it flies
And gazes back with aching, banished eyes.
Fair to yourselves ye are, and every curl
Ye know, and why it lies among its friends ;
Ye know the signs of magic in a girl,
But oh beware,
Knowing the Beauty of your being fair,
For there it ends.
Self-knowledge is destructive. See afar,
Standing between his folded wings, your lord !
Grave is his coming ! Oh be what ye are !
Nay, nay, for to this moment ye were born

GIRLHOOD

To meet his eyes and learn
From his sure word
Yourself, and, interwolved in fires, burn
Your consummation, then, your orbit run,
From where ye pulse and hang above the morn,
Ye slip into the bosom of the sun.

IN THE EARLY DAYS

THE great first children journeyed through
The countries, lonely then,
With all their sheep and little ones,
Their cattle and their men;

And kept themselves in tribes apart
For awe of the great plains;
And learned the length of days and nights,
Of summers and of rains;

And saw no other men through all
The blue horizons wide,
Save their own kind who came to birth,
And marched and sang and died;

IN THE EARLY DAYS

And left the mark of pitchèd tents,
Of footprints in the dew,
And tracks of beaten, billowed grass
Their flocks had pastured through.

And sometimes on a mountain-top
They stood among their spears,
And gazed across an unknown sea
Into the unknown years;

And sometimes o'er a silent plain,
As endless as the sky,
A child from lands unknown would come
And meet them eye to eye;

And they would gaze and love and speak
And rest awhile; and then
Each journeyed past with all his sheep
His cattle and his men.

MOONLIGHT

COME out, come out ; oh, who can stay within ?
Unto the moon the sweet Endymion leaps,
And wide awake the nestled poppies lean
To make a bed where fall'n Endymion sleeps.
Oh, who would not lie down on such a bank,
Where wreathed myrtles slippery and cool
Blink in the dropping dew ; lie down and thank
The Moon for once again her lovely rule,
And watch the journeying stars above him
move,
And though he die ere morn, still lie and
stare
Between the rocking boughs unto his love ;
And then with light upon his eyelids sleep
and smile and perish there.

MOONLIGHT

Come out, come out, the Pearl of Beauty seize,
For he who walks alert at night is keen
But silent in the presence of the trees,
And open to the Influence unseen,
And walks and stops, and walks and stops again,
With sensitive light breath and widened eyes,
And weeps at every beauty as 'twere pain,
And cannot fill his passion of the skies.
And to him leans the Moon, the holy Moon,
Worshipped of worshippers, till he is driven
To ease his eyes adoring lest he swoon,
And fails and falls he to the damp sweet
earth as fail his eyes from heaven.

Oh Wanderer in the wet and tangled woods,
Or over far high fields of long white grass
That have no horizons but melt in floods
Of stars and dim pulsations; come and pass
Through your eternal yearnings and desire.
Here is the wide circle of beech shade

MOONLIGHT

Where sheep have lain at noon, where glow-
worm's fire

And pulsing crickets unto rest pursue.
Here is the bridal of the unmarried mind.

A deep excitement trembles in the air.
Die to the Day. Let no Peona find
Thee any more; between the faltering leaves
she comes and she is fair.

SINFONIA EROICA

He comes, the happy warrior,
The wind has blown him on!
He is great and terrible and sweet,
From flaming hair to rapid feet.

His presence strides the earth full-armed, complete.

Oh, underneath his helmet-rim
The crowded lilies lie.
From some Elysian feast he comes,
Struck with the passion of the drums,
And fragrant from the feast, behold, he comes!

SINFONIA EROICA

He holds all morning in his face,
All fury and all fire.
His panting heart bursts with disdain
Of all that hinders him from pain;
And mine with longing that he might remain.

TO A FRIEND

ON HER WEDDING-DAY

Oh perfect Day, oh perfect Youth,
How can I let you either go?
One to the golden-bosomed West,
The other where I cannot know,
Within the heaven of Love's breast—
Oh perfect Day, oh perfect Youth.

Oh perfect Day, rush on, rush on,
Though tangled are thy jewelled feet
With clinging thoughts of all the past,
Though flaming are the hours too sweet
And final to be lost so fast—
Oh perfect Day, rush on, rush on.

TO A FRIEND

Oh perfect Past, thank God for thee,
And let us not regret that one
With presence star-like and small hands
We knew the playing of has gone
Into the sun-encircled lands—
Oh perfect Past, thank God for thee.

Oh Future, rising with the stars
Into the bridal heavens, bring
The perfect love to her, and set
In morning, as doth everything
That trails a glory of regret—
Oh Future, rising with the stars.

IN FEBRUARY

Oh happy heart,
Oh happy, happy heart,
What is it now that feeds thee?
Far breath of Spring,
Clapping of pigeon's wing,
Nature that calls and needs thee.

Oh happy heart,
Too happy far for art,
Idle with unknown yearning,
In the morning air
Lean thou with forehead bare,
Spring is returning.

Thoughts of thy love,
Clothed in the mists thereof,

IN FEBRUARY

Come with the crowing of cocks and morning
song.

Love stretches his roots
And dreams of golden fruits
Hanging in Paradise the many leaves among.

THERE IS A VEIL

THERE is a veil o'er everything.

And so we muffled walk till death,
Unless some heart shall sob or sing
And lift it with a sudden breath.

Then do we see in vision plain
The radiance desired and clear.
And when the veil has dropped again,
We walk but absent-minded here.

WHILE MARY SLEPT

THE Christ-Child watched sweet Mary's face
The while she slept.

And for the woe that must claim his place
The Christ-Child wept.

And on her breast laid kisses four,
As a cross is made,
To heal those wounds which for evermore
Should be on her laid.

And His little feet in her bosom pressed
Where her soft hair trailed,
To comfort her with remembrance blessed
When His feet were nailed.

WHILE MARY SLEPT

And laid His face on her face in sleep,
To prevent the tears,
When the crown of thorns with His blood
should weep
In the coming years.

MADONNA AND CHILD

LITTLE Son, little Son, climb up to my breast,
And lie amid its warmth at rest.

But shut those stranger eyes from me,

My Rose, my Sorrow, my Peace divine,
And call me "Mother" and not "Mary,"
Although Thou art not mine.

Oh weep not if I hold Thee tight,
For 'mid unheeding kine at night
I dream Thee weak and needing me,
Forget Thy royalty, croon and coo,
Pretend Thee little, and handle Thee,
As other mothers do.

MADONNA AND CHILD

Thine eyes are closed, but He who keeps
Watch over Israel never sleeps!
And when I sleepless lie by Thee
Thy little hands mine eyes do blind
And move across them soothingly,
And feel so large and kind.

It is I would climb to Thy little breast,
Oh hold me there and let me rest!
It is I am weak and weary and small,
And Thy soft arms can carry me;
So put them under me, God, my All,
And let me quiet be.

HOW LOVE CAME

ANNO DOMINI I

THE night was darker than ever before
(So dark is sin),
When the Great Love came to the stable door
And entered in,

And laid Himself in the breath of kine
And the warmth of hay,
And whispered to the Star to shine
And to break, the Day.

O flowers underneath the snow
That chilled His feet,
As He passed by did ye not know
His footsteps sweet?

HOW LOVE CAME

O birds whose voice He gave to sing,
How came it that
In the passing Presence of the Spring
Ye silent sat?

O Judah, with your scriptures great,
Had you forgot?
The Messiah passed within your gate
And you knew it not!

O Bethlehem, for all, all men
The House of Bread,
The Great Love came at midnight then
And was not fed!

With all your prudent thinkings o'er
The morrow's cares,
With highways, taxes, markets for
Your people's wares,

HOW LOVE CAME

With soldiers and a Judgment Hall
And Romans trim,
Your inns were large enough for all—
Save only Him.

You slept. He lay awake to keep
Watch over all:
Your crowded hearts, the far-off sheep,
The odorous stall.

Your priests are learned, your books are wise,
Your legends grand;
But the Heart that in your stable lies
Ye cannot understand.

ANNO DOMINI MDCCCXCIII

O ACHING, tired brain of Earth,
So wise and cold,
In winter desertness and dearth
And taxes old.

Be not too sure at midnight when
You close your door
There is no Stranger among men
Uncareèd for.

Claim not to be the Morn with King
And Shepherd kind;
You are the Bethlehem slumbering,
All deaf and blind.

ANNO DOMINI MDCCCXCIII

And through your empty streets and past
Your windows dead
The Great Love comes to you at last
Unwelcomèd.

Then in the heart you only keep
Your oxen in,
The Great Love finds a place to sleep
And enters in;

And lays Himself in the breath of kine,
All for your sake,
And whispers to your Star to shine,
And bids your Day to break.

THE WHITE ROSE

THOU art so full of the blood of love
It beats in thy stem with its purple stain ;
And burns thy leaves with the heat thereof,
And softens and weakens thy thorns with
pain.

The white of thy heart is signed with it,
Thy smooth cheek-petals are pale for him.
His signet-kiss is on them writ,
Its sweetness runneth over the brim.

Thy perfume, little rose, ah me,
How shall I liken it to love ?
Who has not known it cannot see
It is the very ache thereof.

THE BUTTERFLY

I AM not what I was yesterday,

God knows my name.

I am made in a smooth and beautiful way,

And full of flame.

The color of corn are my pretty wings,

My flower is blue.

I kiss its topmost pearl, it swings

And I swing too.

I dance above the tawny grass

In the sunny air,

So tantalized to have to pass

Love everywhere.

THE BUTTERFLY

O Earth, O Sky, you are mine to roam
In liberty.

I am the soul and I have no home,
Take care of me.

For double I drift through a double world
Of spirit and sense;
I and my symbol together whirled
From who knows whence ?

There's a tiny weed, God knows what good,
It sits in the moss.
Its wings are heavy and spotted with blood
Across and across.

I sometimes settle a moment there,
And I am so sweet,
That what it lacks of the glad and fair
I fill complete.

THE BUTTERFLY

The little white moon was once like me;
But her wings are one.
Or perhaps they closed together be
As she swings in the sun.

When the clovers close their three green wings
Just as I do;
I creep to the primrose heart of things,
And close mine too.

And then wide opens the candid night,
Serene and intense;
For she has instead of love and light
God's confidence.

And I watch that other butterfly,
The one-winged moon,
Till, drunk with sweets in which I lie,
I dream and swoon.

THE BUTTERFLY

And then when I to three days grow,
I find out pain.

For swift there comes an ache, I know
That I am twain.

And nevermore can I be one
In liberty.

O Earth, O Sky, your use is done,
Take care of me.

LOVE AND SPRING

Love has been here in the night; and to-day

 The city is overwrought.

The streets are thrilled with a strange perfume,

And life is stopped in silence and bloom

 Too sweet for thought.

Love has been here in the night; and to-day

 The ache of it is deep.

For even the pale little eager moon

Comes up from her tree-tops hours too soon,

 For she cannot sleep.

Love has been here in the night; and to-day

 The world is overstrained.

LOVE AND SPRING

It is only the Spring? Ah, yes, but Love
Has left a joy in the heart thereof
All unexplained.

Spring, thou art only a measure of time
In happy Nature's sight;
It is Love that burns his path through snow
To open Earth's heart; and Love, I know,
Was here in the night.

THE ELM-TREE

The young elm stands alone

In a field of its own.

And the spirit that feeds it is the summer air,

That long-armed, reaching spirit, soft and bare,

That brings it dew and stars and thoughts
Serene :

The young elm standing alone

In a field of its own

Of emerald green.

is never restless or wild like the lesser trees;

It stirs not, save to weight of little bird.

Preoccupied with dreams it stands,

Lifting its benediction hands

Over the happy lands,

And aye forgets to drop them or say the
word.

THE ELM-TREE

It wraps itself in a vine
Of its own design,
That hides its naked liteness twine on twine,
Till over itself it leans to look and smile
At its own gay loveliness, and all the while
It is there in the fields alone,
With none to marvel, and none
Its secret majestic pleasures to divine.

So self-absorbed it lives in dreams so deep
It scarcely notices the noon-day sheep
That lie in its shadow's brink
To chew the clover and blink,
Then pillow'd in their mutual love to sleep.

The dew and the dark of the heavens it holds
In its leafy folds,
And bears like a mother the little birds,
And says soft words
To the young oxen standing below,

THE ELM-TREE

With their wide faces
In their stamped places,
Standing below.

But in the night, which all trees love,
It opens its heart to the spirit of air,
And the subtle leaves disclosing move.
Oh, sudden, strange, and fair !
The yellow moon lies shrinèd there,
And the elm rejoices now.
See, it lifts her upward, bough by bough,
Till alert she stands
In the clinging hands
That yearn to give what more they yearn to
keep,
And fling her out to the stars, to the stars and
the deep.

A CRITICISM IN VALUES

Nay, lips so sweet, ye must not be so red,
Else were all roses for your sake but dead.
Would you rob us of summer for your sake?
Our pittance of dear Paradise would take,
And lock it in the garden of your smile,
Where our bereavement charmèd is awhile?
Nay, lips so sweet, ye must not be so red.

Nay, eyes so clear, ye must not be so blue,
Else were all heaven entrancèd down to you.
Would you absorb our skies that we may
know
How sweet for sunshine to yourselves to go?
And set your premium on the blessed day,
Knowing so well we cannot choose but pay?
Nay, eyes so clear, ye must not be so blue.

F R A G M E N T S O F M A R B L E

I

P R O C E S S I O N A L

My love leads the white bulls to sacrifice.
He is white, and he leans against their folded
necks.

Blue is the sky behind them, and the dust from
the highway yellows his ivory limbs.
He leans and moves, restraining, yet drawn
on by tossing heads.

He feels the festal music; rapid and strong
are his arms and breast;
Yet from his waist beneath, loose and slow
is his resting pace.

FRAGMENTS OF MARBLE

Flowers are in his hair, and he is fair.
He thinks he is but strong ; he can overcome,
And his mind sees only the impatient horns ;
But my heart sees his slimness, and would
care for him like a mother.
My love leads the white bulls to sacrifice.

II

THE GREEK BATH

Behold him fresh-sprung from the tepid bath,
Light-poised, resplendent ; from his polished limbs
The vapors warm drip to the rosy heels
That kiss the pavement ; to his cheek and neck
The ruddy curls beaded with moisture cling.
The breast, superb, with delicate desires
Pants after life indefinite ; alert
In his own glory rests he. Hail, all hail,
Thou passing instant of the Perfect, hail.

F R A G M E N T S O F M A R B L E

For with the act which wakes and which de-
stroyes,

Lo, how he swift has turned upon his thigh
With movement slight, and glances to his heel.

THE DEATH OF A ROSE

THE hours hold thee in caress,
Too frail for years.
The subtle minutes hold
In spaces gold
Thy movements palpitant, and silent spheres
Wait on thy passion strained
From centuries full-veined.
Close form compacted from divine excess
Of all that's human, in the darkening room
Thou layest wide thy bloom.
Shivers of fire and pearl illumine thee;
Celestial vigor stains thine ivory,
And bourgeoning to fulness dost thou lean.
Oh pulse unseen !

THE DEATH OF A ROSE

The room is heavy, nothing moves; no
breath.

Soft falls thy first-lost petal. In amaze
Thou bendest over it to gaze
And meetest Death.

THE DAY AFTER THE DEATH OF A ROSE

I could not call thee friend,
To whom I nothing gave.
Yet now that thou art gone
The house is bare and lone,
And with me always a regret I have.

Thy presence in a room
Did lesser things restrain.
At table in my place,
To think upon thy face
Did make me rise and go to thee again.

I played the sweetest airs
Upon the tender keys.

DAY AFTER THE DEATH OF A ROSE

But thou beside me gazing
Wast sweetness so amazing,
That silence dropped between the harmonies.

And when I went abroad
I was of thee aware
Behind me in the room,
And felt thy hastening bloom,
And all thy precious petals opening there.

And in the silent night,
When I lay down to sleep,
Thy heart so wide awake,
Its most of life to take,
Did force me like a tragedy to weep.

Oh, Beauty, art thou dead ?
Soft-fallen, didst thou die ?
How comes it that we meet—
That thou shouldst lie complete
Within the hand of thing so frail as I ?

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

I

Rise, Baby, rise,
Life is incomplete.
Heaven needs thine eyes,
Earth thy dancing feet,
Birds thy rapt attention,
Moon thy mild dismay :
All earth's sweet invention
For thy use at play ;
Startling red the berries
For thy wild delight,
Flowers full of fairies
To shut them up at night,
And perfect every blade of grass
Where heaven-accustomed feet shall pass.

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

II

Earth has run before thee,
Honey-hedged her lanes,
Sent up skylarks o'er thee,
Feather-wet with rains :
Hung with dew the shadows,
Broidered all the rocks,
Cowslipped all the meadows
For thy nibbling flocks ;
Voiced her exultation
In summer-throated birds,
Smiled a salutation
Far too sweet for words,
And laid before thy homesick eyes
Her memories of Paradise.

III

Come, Baby, come !
Come to wrong and pain,

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

With thy quick tears, come,
And wash earth clean again.
Come with sweet young fancies
We have lost so soon :
Midnight fairy dances
Whirled against the moon,
Madrigals unsung,
All spirit-footed sighs
The dreaming trees among,
Before thy dreaming eyes ;
Strange presences along the green,
And tinkling flutes of gods unseen.

IV

Strange, thou dost not know
What we daily pass !
Stars that come and go !
Cobwebs in the grass !

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

Strange, that thou shalt find
Dandelions new!
And of playful mind
Man and nature too!
Strange, to recreate
Eden round thy knees!
God, unfear'd playmate,
Souls in all the trees!
Strange, that Truth for us is hidden,
Yet daily walks with thee unbidden!

v

Virtue and valor's union
Cometh sure of these:
That first drunk communion
With the sinless trees;
Thoughts at morning, thought
'Mid the larks and dew,

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

Most divinely fraught
For thy uses true,
When thy youth's defiance
Calls thee far away
Into self-reliance
And the burning day,
And hands unknown, in service sweet,
Tie wingèd sandals to thy feet.

VI

Hail, Baby, hail !
Life is worth the trying !
Worth it if we fail,
Worth it even dying !
I am here; I know
That no robin's song
But is worth the woe
Of a whole life long.

TO A NEW-BORN BABY

Love is over-plenty
For the famine stored,
Joy enough for twenty
Round each head is poured ;
And long before thy need begin
Goodness and truth are garnered in !

A SUMMER AFTERNOON

IN the reaching shade of trees,
Where the trees are not,
With the level hills beyond,
Blue and fair and hot,

On my back I lie at rest,
Tranquilly to drowse,
Watch the happy horses feed
And the peaceful cows.

There are daisies rollicking
In the western sun ;
Soon the shade will catch you, dears,
And your day is done.

A SUMMER AFTERNOON

All aslant for love of him
Through the long grass flocking,
First one nods and then the next,
And all the buds go rocking.

And because there are no trees
'Twixt me and the sky,
I shall find the dim, sweet moon
Somewhere by-and-by.

There she is, and there again
She has gone somehow.
Far too wide and deep the sky
For me to find her now.

Oh, it is a happy thing
When summer days are hot,
To lie within the shade of trees,
But where the trees are not.

YOUTH

I AM the spirit that denies.
Yes, and with full-regarding eyes
Comprehending the facts of earth's sorrow and
shame,
And denying the truth of it just the same;
That takes man's face in two palms soft,
And looks deep into its brow and oft,
And finds the good it has longed to find,
And denies there is anything hidden behind.

I am the spirit that denies
This earth to be no more Paradise.
I deny that God walks not with men.
I have met Him at even and talked with Him
then.

YOUTH

I deny that of love there is ever a lack,
For I've felt His sun-arm across my back
As I wandered at spring-time into the land,
And talked with the dog-wood hand in hand.

I am the spirit that denies
Straight into your face, straight into your eyes,
Wise Age, that for all your wisdom and gain
You are nobler for noticing every stain.
I deny that one cannot race on through earth's
heat
And come out healthy and clean and sweet.
I deny that God's path is so overgrown
That a child could not toddle straight to Him
alone.

I am the spirit that denies
Any fear of the earth or the seas or the skies ;
That fronts the Unknown with forehead calm,
And gathers Life's reins with my soft, wet palm.

YOUTH

I learn a verse from the Bible by heart,
And well provided with love, I start,
And deny that Heaven is so far away
That I cannot reach it at close of day.

AS THEY WALK IN THE
PLEASANT COUNTRY

SONG

Look, love, how the wild roses kiss in the wind ;
Look, love, how the butterfly dallies behind ;
Look, love, how the robins are mating above ;
My heart would be mating, oh, look on me,
 love.

Look, love, on the poppies all blowing and red ;
Look, love, on the pretty asparagus bed ;
Look, love, how the green apples hang on the
 bough ;
My heart's full of summer, oh, look on me now.

AS THEY WALK IN THE COUNTRY

Look, love, on the white village steeple afar;
Look, love, on the hills, see how peaceful they
are;

Look, love, on the beauty of yonder green tree;
Look no more on anything, only on me.

LULLABY

O'er the hay-cocks comes the moon,
Father will be coming soon
Through the clover and the dew,
Home to mother and to you.
In the barn-yard he will stay,
Just to put his scythe away.
Cows and sheep wait for him, too;
Dearer than his flocks are you.

Arms that labor all day long
Are for loving very strong.
Hearts that bear the heat of Junes
Know so many pretty tunes.

LULLABY

Fire-flies and fire-stars
Twinkle through the pasture bars,
Miles of meadows are at rest;
Sleep, for father loves you best.

THE INEXPRESSIBLE

As one who, lounging through a summer noon
Down in the clover where the crickets play,
Watching above the hay-cocks the white moon
Dreaming her midnight in a blaze of day,

Appreciates in rapt dismay the whole,
In sweet winds drifting over fields new mown,
Yet, through the very fulness of his soul,
Cannot and cares not much to write it down;

So in my sweetheart's sweetness does my heart
Lie down in wonder of her loveliness,
Which is too intimate to give to art,
Too much to feel to wittingly express.

THE POPPY

THERE is a poppy growing
In my city's little square ;
Between its red lips glowing,
The fields of Rome are there.

The charm of the Campagna
Has lurèd me away
To the long white heat of grasses
That whistle and sweep and sway.

And in the cool, clean shadow
Of an empty little tomb,
I lie and study the arabesques
That haunt the plastered gloom.

THE POPPY

The poppies are linked with satyrs
Who dance by one and two,
And lean with lizards into their cups
To sip a drop of dew.

From out the cool, clean shadow
Of the tomb deserted and gay,
I see the living poppies
In the long grass sweep and sway.

And from out my office window,
Above the city square,
I see the exile poppy,
And the fields of Rome are there.

THE BUD

It was all green and still,
And not a twig did move,
Then suddenly it was there,
As is the thought of love.

A star lost in the day,
All still and strange and sweet,
It peers between the green,
For worship does entreat.

And some night in the dark,
A flower wide and fair
Is lying on the tired leaves—
The bud has vanished, where?

THE WEDDING-GOWN

THOU art sacred and shining and soft with the
dreams of old.

To thy making went
Heartful content,
And fingers slow with dreams and wonder-
ment.

Faint radiance from her visions dost thou hold.
With thy wearing came
Thoughts of his name,

Of home and mother never again the same.
Shake out her presence from each shining fold.

She is here, she is fair.
The young sisters stare.
While trembling mother-fingers, eyes love-blind,
Grope for the little button-holes behind.

THE WEDDING-GOWN

She burns, she glows,
And from her brows
Her hair is braided in with dreams and vows;
And the high shell-comb she has so longed to
wear
Completes at last the glory of her hair.

She is ready at last, open the chamber-door;
She is ready at last.
Where is the trumpet-blast
And the thunder of drums?
For she comes, she comes,
Down the narrow, winding stair,
Silent and fine and fair;
And the lads on the open threshold lean and
stare.
Silent and slow she gleams,
And her eyes are full of dreams;
She sees the country teams
At the fence outside.

THE WEDDING-GOWN

Down the little stair she comes at last, the Bride,
And the wind from the hay-field blows the
veil aside.

She is ready at last; open the chamber-door,
And close it behind her on the Never-more.

She is gone; and the house is changed and
thrilled and dim.

There is nothing to say
Now that she is away;
Let us all be quiet and think of the wonder-
ful day.

The moon in the orchard walks, and the world
is white.

Shut the doors; the child will not come home
to-night.

She was kind, she was good, she was true.
What more had we to do
Than to make her so, and send her away with
him?

THE WEDDING-GOWN

Oh, Love, that cannot step inside the door,
But the house is perfumed through for ever-
more,

All through the house and up and down the
stair

Where she has passed, thou leavest violets there,
Dropped from thy hair,
And heavy is the heart, heavy the air.

She is gone ; yes, years ago, but Love goes
never,

And sleeps in folded wedding-gowns forever.

Unfold it while in heart thou dost unfold

The rose-laid faith and passion of thy youth ;

And she is here as in the days of old,

Here in all truth ;

And passes through the dreaming mind,

Trailing disorder sweet behind,

And visions turbulent with summer wind ;

THE WEDDING-GOWN

Of sweet-stringed instruments, and tables white
For those who march in, in the candle-light;
 Of choking love that boasts
 The proudest of all toasts,
And drinks it, silent, to the face that beams
At the other end of that far feast in dreams.

THE END



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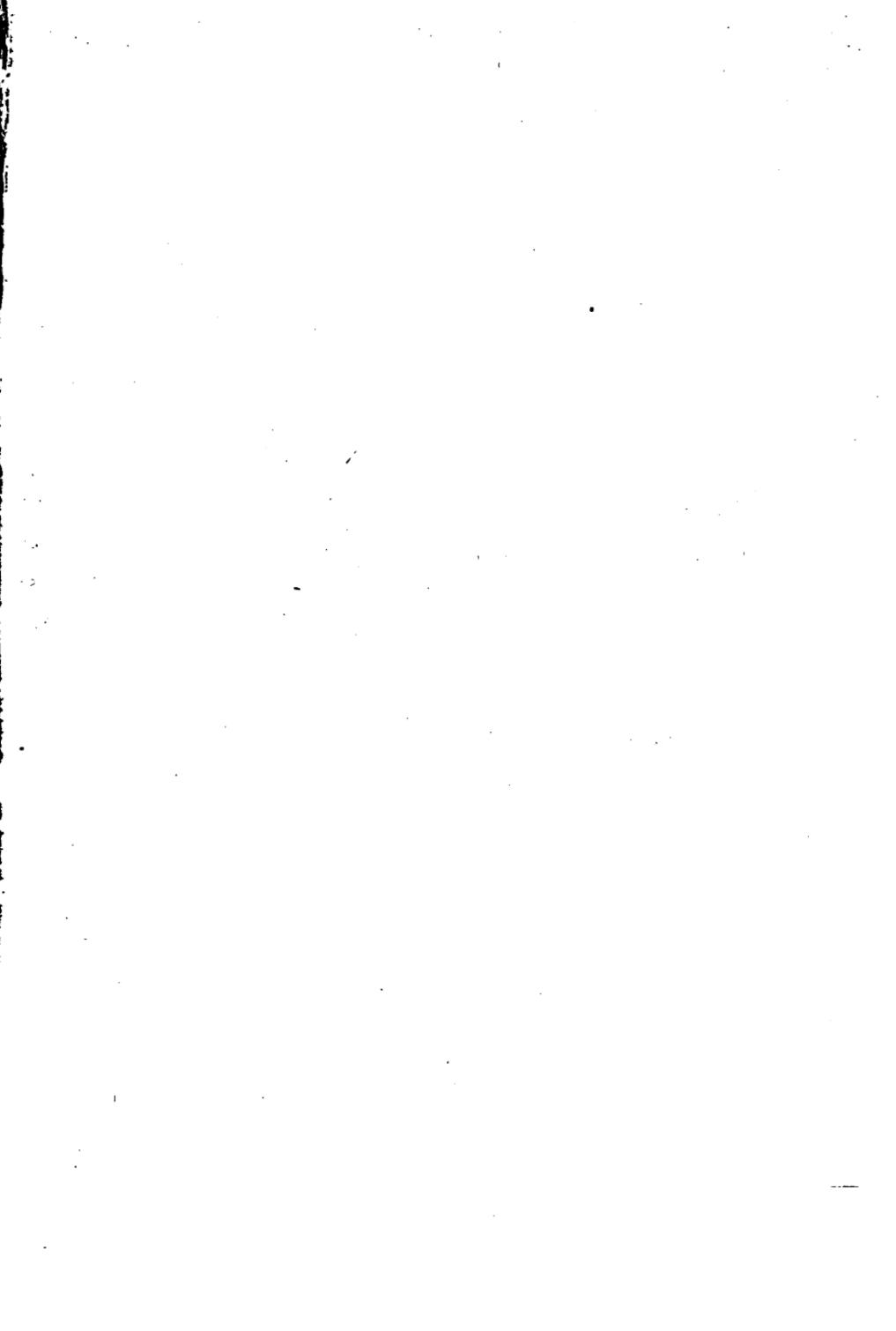
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